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*THE  
MINISTRY OF JESUS.*







**THE**  
**MINISTRY OF JESUS.**



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THE  
MINISTRY OF JESUS.

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For Daily Meditation.

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By C. E. D.

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LONDON:  
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,  
HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

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DEDICATION.

TO

LADY CATHARINE LONG.

—o—

I DEDICATE this little work to you, my dear Lady Catharine, as a slight memorial of my long affection for you, beginning in my childhood and ever increasing to the present hour. And now that our friendship is cemented by that only tie which can endure, it is delightful to think that we shall meet hereafter in a world of unspeakable happiness, where we shall enjoy the "Ministry of Jesus," no longer as sustaining us unseen in our manifold troubles and pardoning our many iniquities, but as leading our spirits, made perfect by His gracious sacrifice, to the still waters and green pastures of a joyful world, and fu

DEDICATION.

filling to us His own most gracious Prayer,  
"that we might be with Him where He is,  
and see His glory."

Believe me ever,

My dear Lady Catharine,

Yours very affectionately.

C. E. D.

Newborough

June, 1866.

## PREFACE.

EIGHTEEN hundred and thirty-six years ago the Ministry of Jesus began.—The world was then sunk in heathenism, part of God's own people scattered throughout it, and Judea itself was tributary to Rome.

This Ministry has come down to us, and finds us, not sunk in heathenism, but professing Christians,—professing to be followers of Jesus! Many sunk so far in sin that it is almost heathenism; others so careless and lukewarm, that they need arousing. Many that need encouragement, many shaken by infidelity and doubt,—all who need help in their onward course; and may these words of Jesus afford daily Meditations for that purpose, that we, Christians, may grow in holiness, and by the Spirit's help, glorify our God on earth, for Jesus has said,—

*“Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”*



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# THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

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## MEDITATION I.

### *The Commencement of the Ministry of Jesus.*

JESUS, while on earth, began His ministry with these words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

And now that He is ascended into the heavens, does He not carry on the same ministry to our hearts ?

Does He not so convince us of sin that we repent ? and if we really repent, is not the kingdom of heaven at hand ?

When a soul is led to say *feelingly*, "I have sinned," does not the conviction that "the Lord hath put away thy sin," come, as if the words were even now spoken by our blessed Lord?

And if God has thus put away thy sin for the sake of Jesus, thou art "a child of God; and if a child, then an heir, heir of God, and joint heir with Christ," and "the kingdom of heaven is thus at hand," or *near* you—it is yours.

Then you patiently wait for that glorious time when all the redeemed shall enter the new heavens and the new earth, "purifying yourself (in your daily walk) as He is pure," by the Spirit of God, the Comforter which Jesus gives you till He comes again.

If you have never repented, if you never have had this godly sorrow for *sin*, you have not yet accepted the first

work of the Spirit—"to convince of sin." When you yield to that, you will soon come to your Saviour, and then will you feel the second work of the Spirit, that "He shall convince you of righteousness;" not indeed of your own righteousness, but of your Saviour's, which He will give you: for as He takes upon Himself the weight of *your sins*, so He puts on you, He clothes you, with *His righteousness*, and God accepts you for His sake, pardoning you fully. Therefore, rejoice in your salvation.

## II.

### *The Calling of His Disciples, and beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.*

THE next thing we read of our Saviour is that He calls His disciples,—those twelve who are to attend Him in His Ministry. Jesus saith unto them, “Follow Me.”

You are called *now*,—for every aspiration after a better life, a holier life, is the Spirit of God calling you. Are you, then, following Jesus? His disciples *straightway* followed Him.

Resist no more these strivings within you; however small they may seem, watch them, look out for them, and *straightway* follow His leadings.

*The teaching of Jesus, “His preach-*

ing the Gospel of the Kingdon," " His healing all manner of diseases," brought multitudes around Him ; and then it was that He went up into a mountain and taught His disciples, and those that came with them, in those words called the Sermon on the Mount, found in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St. Matthew, and in the other Gospels.

Here we find Precepts very different to this world's maxims, or even to the practice of some professing Christians. We must impress them on our minds so that we may walk as children of God.

Jesus begins by saying who are Blessed :—

The Poor in Spirit.

They that Mourn.

The Meek.

They that hnnger and thirst after  
*righteousness.*

The Merciful.

The Pure in heart.

The Peace Makers.

Those who are persecuted for  
righteousness sake.

Those who are spoken against for  
Christ's sake.

Consider these different classes in all  
their bearings, and examine your heart  
on them, so that you may be sure of  
inheriting a blessing.

A remarkable expression occurs  
when Jesus blesses the Meek, for He  
says they shall inherit the Earth.  
This, and many other parts where in-  
heriting the Earth is spoken of, clearly  
refers to the New Heavens and the  
New Earth mentioned in St. Peter, as  
this present earth is to be dissolved  
*with all its wicked works.*

### III.

#### *The Salt of the Earth and Light of the World.*

WHEN Jesus had ended the blessings, He says to those whom He had called, and who had obeyed His calling, “Ye are the Salt of the Earth”—“Ye are the Light of the World;” warning them at the same time, that if the Salt hath lost its savour it is of no use.

All Christians are as the “Salt of the Earth.” Have you lost your savour?—Your usefulness?

Lose no opportunity for good, either in your words or actions. Your example will—*must* tell one way,—either *for good or for evil.*

“Light,” Jesus compares to a city set on a hill, *which cannot be hid*. Neither says He “do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick ; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.”

As the “Light of the World” do you hide your light in any way, as under a bushel ? Do you let any known sin darken it ? Remember it is to give light to all that are in the house—Yes, *your* house.

Jesus concludes this subject with the command :—

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”

And how are you to do this when *you feel yourself utterly unfit to overcome one sin, or do one good work ?*



Take the sword of the Spirit. Ask and *ye shall* receive it ; and with it, fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Obey every wish in your heart to do good, wherever you are.

#### IV.

#### *The Lord's standard of right and wrong.*

JESUS says to His disciples "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

Jesus does not here speak of the ceremonial law—*that* was to be done away with,—but the commandments were holy and good, and the Prophecies were to be fulfilled. He who rests quietly in the fact that Jesus has died for him, and rejects the commandments, is no believer; because Jesus here states the continuance of the Law and the Prophets, and He exhorts His hearers to *do His commandments*, and to exhort

others to do them too ; thus showing that faith in Him, is not a dead faith, but a faith which works *from love*.

He not only enforces the commandment “do not kill,” but carries the deed back to its origin in the heart,—*anger*, virulent abuse, malice ; for He says “if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, go and be reconciled before thou offerest the gift.”

So now never approach the Sacramental Table if you are living in anger with a brother Christian. Pray for its removal before you dare approach, or even before you offer up your daily praises to your God,—for is it not written “let not the sun go down on thy wrath” ?

*Cast your sin then fully on Jesus for*

forgiveness, and ask His Holy Spirit to help you, then may you praise your God in sincerity and truth.

As Jesus carries the command "Thou shalt not kill" back to its source in the heart, so also the command "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" for He says "whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart;" and Jesus clearly states "that if a wife is divorced and a man marry her he committeth adultery," and our blessed Lord Himself here speaks of the "danger of hell fire" and the "being cast into hell."

Jesus then forbids all *swearing*—all *retaliation*, and commands generosity; but what is still more against our evil natures, He enforces the love of our *enemies*, and adds the command "Be

ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

This is our aim. We are not to content ourselves with being as good as our neighbours, or even better. Our Lord's standard is far higher than man's: let us daily press towards it in the *strength of the Lord*.

Next we find a command about giving alms.

Jesus says we are to be *very mindful* how alms are given,—not with a boasting spirit, but we are to do it quietly and humbly, for the real good of the person, and not for our own glory.

In all these commands keep in mind that they are those of your loving Saviour, who wishes "that *none* of you should perish, but have everlasting life."

## V.

### *PRAYER.*

OUR Lord's directions about prayer are very minute. We are not to make a great show of prayer,—not to pray too loud, so as to disturb others or attract attention to ourselves. Even in our own room we are to shut the door and pray to our Father in secret : we must be alone with God. Either in our own room or in Church, our spirit must be withdrawn from earthly objects and thoughts, and centered on God. That is real Prayer, real communion with God, which is the sort of prayer our *Saviour enjoins*. And then Jesus pro-

ceeds to give His disciples an example of prayer, saying, "after this manner therefore pray ye."—

"Our Father which art in Heaven,"

To whom His children may always come.

*When they have sinned.—*

"I have sinned before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy child."

*When in sorrow.—*

"The sorrows of my heart are enlarged : O bring Thou me out of my trouble."

*When you are happy.—*

"Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

"Hallowed be thy Name."

Holy and dear is His Name to every child of God, and always spoken of in reverence and Godly fear.

"Thy Kingdom come ;"

Rule Thou in my heart, till Thou rulest in the *New Heavens* and *New Earth* which are to come.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ;”

Thy will oh Lord, not mine, be done ! Enable me to overcome all selfishness, and also to pray constantly for others.

“Give us this day our daily bread ;”

Give us each day the food for our bodies, and daily strengthen our souls with Thy Holy Spirit.

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us ;”

As we pray for our own pardon, cast Thou all malice and all bad temper out of our hearts, that the sun may not go down on our wrath, lest we draw upon ourselves a curse instead of a blessing.

“Lead us not into temptation,”

Suffer us not to be tempted by any thing that may happen to us this day, or by any situation in which *we may be placed* ; always remembering that “Thy *grace is sufficient for us.*”



“ But deliver us from evil,”

Deliver us from all accidents to our bodies, and from all that may assault and hurt our souls.

“ For Thine is the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory, for ever and ever.”  
Amen.

Looking to that time when sin and sorrow shall cease for ever, and the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdom of the Lord, and He shall have all Power and all Glory world without end. Amen.

After giving us this prayer which, though simple, comprehends much, our Blessed Lord enforces *Importunity* in prayer, by a man asking his friend for bread in the night and he would not rise and give him, but because of his *importunity* he rose and gave what was needed ; and immediately Jesus says “ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall

be opened unto you : for *every one that asketh* receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son ask bread, of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will ye give him a serpent ? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how *much* more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask Him*."

This is Real Prayer,  
Importunity,  
Certainty.

Words of Jesus, which have been,  
and are, and ever will be the comfort  
of His seeking people.

## VI.

### *Several Injunctions.*

AFTER teaching His disciples how to pray, Jesus gives them many injunctions as to other subjects.

Fasting is one ; and He says that we are *not* to fast as before men, but as before God.

Jesus then shows how impossible it is to serve two masters,—impossible to serve God and the world. As necessary is it now, as in the days of our Saviour. Jesus next tells us not to be over careful as to the sustenance of our bodies, and our clothing ; these things are to be minor considerations, and we are to *seek first* the kingdom of heaven.

Did we think less of these things there would not be so much distress in the world, for what many spend in these useless luxuries would often sustain the life of the poor when they are sick, for their wages cannot purchase necessities at such a time.

Then our Saviour cautions us against judging others, but we are to be more careful in examining ourselves, and He bids us live by this rule,—

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Again, “Enter into the strait gate, and follow the narrow way.”

Jesus tells us there are hypocrites, and shows us how to know them, by comparing them to a tree,—“by *their fruits* shall ye know them ; for a good *tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nei-*

ther can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

See how Jesus speaks of the conduct of Christians. A mere profession of loving Him, unless it produces a different life is of no avail ; and the loving Saviour is forced to declare, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he *which doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name ? and in Thy Name cast out devils ? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works ?

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from Me, ye that *work iniquity*."

"Therefore whosoever *heareth* these *sayings* of Mine and *doeth* them I will

likened to a man that built a house  
on a rock . . . . . and it fell not." "When  
Jesus had ended these sayings of  
the people were astonished at His  
doctrine." It does not say *they follow*  
it. Beware lest you reject it !

## VII.

*Jesus' teaching and preaching, and  
the subject of it.*

“AND Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, and healing every sickness.”

What a ministry was this,—teaching, preaching, and healing :—

Miracles such as no mere man could perform, for Jesus cured the leper—made the lame to walk—opened the eyes of the blind, and the mouths of the dumb—stilled the tempest with a word—and raised the dead from their *graves*.

His teaching and preaching was chiefly in Parables: the subject, *the Gospel of the Kingdom* :—

Such were the parables of the sower and the seed—the good seed and the tares—the mustard seed—the pearl of great price—the net cast into the sea—the hiring of labourers for the vineyard—the householder who purchased a vineyard, and sent first his servants, and then his son to look after the husbandmen—the king who made a marriage for his son—the ten virgins—the man travelling into a far country—the prodigal son—the rich man and Lazarus—the ten pieces of money :—

These are all words of Jesus, and we do well to read them and think of them.

Heaven and hell are clearly set *before us* by our Lord Jesus Christ



And in St. Matthew, the 25th chapter 31st verse, He speaks as clearly of His second coming :—" When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory ; and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

And Jesus it is that says to those on the right hand, " Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

And Jesus it is who says to those on the left, " Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels."

Yes, they that work wickedness are  
*to be with the devil and his angels for*

*ever* ; though it is evident that “the everlasting fire” was not prepared for *them* : it is by their *own* rejection of the Saviour and the Gospel of the Kingdom that they have brought themselves there.

“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, God or the world.”

## VIII.

### *Further Teachings.*

WONDERFUL also was the teaching of Jesus on many other occasions, which was intended to lead us heavenward, and which will also help us in our daily intercourse with our fellow creatures.

When the publicans and sinners sat down to eat with Jesus and His disciples, and the pharisees questioned His disciples about it, Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they which are sick : but go learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy and not sacrifice ; for I came not to call the *righteous* but *sinners* to repentance."

Your soul needs a Physician, for you are sick ; you are a sinner, and to *you* Jesus says He comes.

When Jesus is sending forth His disciples He says, "Whosoever will confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven."

Sometimes it is very difficult to confess Jesus before men—not that you are now called upon to confess in words that you believe in Him—but is it not difficult so to speak and so to act, as a real follower of Jesus ? difficult not to concede a little to those in whose society we find ourselves ? Thus in *little* things we must be careful, and endeavour to remember the words of Jesus.

*See how kindly* the Saviour invites

those who feel themselves guilty and sinful in His sight.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give *you* rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye *shall* find *rest* unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus gives you “*rest*” by taking the “*heavy burden*” of your sins, and putting “*the easy yoke* and light burden” of His own righteousness upon you, and thus you get “*rest*” unto your souls.

## IX.

### *The Sabbath.*

JESUS declares Himself "Lord even of the Sabbath Day ;" and He says, "Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

"This doing good" is very different from taking your own pleasure, or your own amusement, or following your weekly avocations on that day, rather work for God. Praise Him in His House and seek to bring souls to *Him*.

It is a day of rest. Rest from the world and the daily struggle of life, but let it be rest in God.

A day given up to drawing nearer *and nearer to your God yourself, and*

bearing up others in your prayers to Him.

There is your family,  
There are your servants,  
There are your friends,  
There is your minister,  
There is the congregation you worship with.

There are the ministers and the congregations, who like you on this day are worshipping God, in every part of this kingdom, and in all parts of the world.

Are there none you wish to be turned from the error of their ways ?

None, weak and doubting, whom you wish to be strengthened ? None fallen, whom you wish to be raised again ?

Oh be much and often in communion with the God that *heareth and answereth the prayers of His people.*

## X.

*The sin not to be forgiven, and the  
importance of words.*

JESUS speaks strongly of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come."

*To understand this difficult passage,*



consider that it is *by* the Holy Ghost that you believe in Christ the Son of God, through whose sacrifice you receive Pardon, and *without the Holy Ghost* you can conquer no sin, and do nothing acceptable to God. Therefore pray that He may more and more dwell in you. Cease resisting those little leadings within you, nourish those little good thoughts that flit across your soul day by day like the breathings of the wind.

Often examine your heart and cultivate a tender conscience, for on that the Spirit works more easily. Hear what Jesus says of the heart:—"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things; but I say unto you that every idle word that men

shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy *words* shalt thou be justified and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned."

Not only then by actions, but Jesus says "by *words*."

Think what words you are in the habit of using. There are many sort of words. Careless words, angry words, wicked words, idle words, bitter words, sarcastic, and provoking words.

*Words* make much of the happiness and unhappiness of this life. Never was a daily prayer more necessary than David's: "Set a watch before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips."

## XI.

### *Jesus and His Mother, and the fifth Commandment.*

JESUS especially enforces the fifth commandment.

When told that His mother and brethren desire to speak to Him, Jesus replies—"Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? And He stretched out His hand towards His disciples, and said Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister and mother."

This must not be considered as disrespect to His mother, but evidently

to show how dear and near to Him are *all* those who do the will of His Father which is in heaven. He could not have expressed His love to them more strongly than by the ties of such near relationship.

It might also have been to check any jealous or disappointed feeling that might arise in their hearts when they saw others who, humanly speaking, had a greater claim on Him.

For when the Pharisees complain to Him that His disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders, Jesus replies—"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions? for God commanded saying, Honour thy father and thy mother, he that curseth father or mother *let him die the death*; but ye say Whosoever *shall say to his father or mother, It is*

a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by Me, and honour not his father and mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of none effect by your traditions."

And is not the commandment made of none effect in our days? Where is the honour due to father or mother? What is that spirit of independence in children as they grow up, but a "*making the commandment of none effect*," and displeasing to Jesus.

How often in families do the children act as the Pharisees taught, saying "It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me."

Well may our Saviour add—"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth but their *heart is far from me*."

How often in Church have you heard this commandment read, and made the reply—"Lord incline our *hearts* to keep this law." Think for a moment what Jesus would have said to you. Are you keeping even this one commandment? and how is it with the others? Are you serving God with your lips, and *not your heart*?

How is it with your daily prayers? How is it in the House of God? Would Jesus say to you—"Ye hypocrites."

It is the *heart* that Jesus looks at, for He says—"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, falsewitness, blasphemies; these are things which defile a man." He also says—"My son, give Me thy *heart*; for with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness."

*When Jesus asks His disciples—*

“Whom say ye that I am?” Simon Peter answers—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

And Jesus said—“Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.”

And so shall we be blessed, if we in *our hearts* feel Christ to be the Son of the living God, who has lived and died for our sakes, and in our stead.

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## XII.

### *Conversion.*

JESUS' teachings about *conversion* are very plain.

“He called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst, and said, Verily verily *I* say unto you, except ye be *converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever humbleth himself as this little child, the same shall be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

So to be converted, Jesus says we must be *humble*. Yes, we must humble our hearts and submit to God's way of *salvation*; and it is most humbling to



get rid of all self confidence, and come, as a sinner and a suppliant, to the Saviour's feet,—to plead His merits for salvation, and not our own,—willing to give up every sin that is dominant in our hearts, feeling how hateful it must be to a Holy Saviour.

When Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night, believing Him to be a teacher come from God, the very first thing Jesus says to him, is, "*Except a man be born again* he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven." Nicodemus having no idea of a spiritual birth, answers Him accordingly; and Jesus says to him—"Except a man be born of water, *and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

“Marvel not that *I* said unto you  
Ye *must* be born *again*.”

Born of the flesh he was : he was a living man, but he needed the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart as a living principle, producing spiritual fruits, and not the works of the flesh. God's Spirit is to work in our spirits, and Jesus explains this work, when He says “the wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Examine your own hearts, and see if this important change has passed upon you. Perhaps you say with Nicodemus —“How can these things be?” and though Jesus cannot say to you, as He did to him, “Art thou a master in *Israel*, and knowest not these things?”

-

yet Jesus may say to many a member of His Church on earth,—Have you attended the ministry of My Word Sunday after Sunday, have you so often read My Holy Word, and yet knowest thou not these things ?

“And Jesus was *astonished*” at Nicodemus ; so is He *astonished* at those who do not now see these things that He has so plainly put before them.

Pray earnestly for this important change, if you have it not ; and then let Jesus teach you as He continued teaching Nicodemus.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”

For what reason ? “To draw all men unto Him. That *whosoever* believeth on Him should have eternal life. For God so loved the world that

He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

And why are some men not saved? Jesus tells you. See Him standing over Jerusalem, “and when He beheld the City, *He wept* over it, saying, Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often *would I* have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *but ye would not.*” *Ye will not*—that is the reason when a man is not saved—simply *He will not.*

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and said “*I would,*” but *ye would not.*

*Reader, do not make your loving*

Saviour weep over you. He bends over every sinner and entreats him to return to his God before it is too late. Trifle not with the Spirit's warnings, and let it not be said of you "*Ye would not.*"

### XIII.

#### *Conversion continued.*

WHY are there diversities of opinion about *conversion*?

Some treating it as unessential to salvation, and not proper to be preached to a Christian congregation—necessary only to the heathen.

It is indeed a shame that it *has* to be preached to a *Christian* congregation. What is a Christian congregation, in our days, composed of?

Is it composed of those who have from their earliest youth feared and loved the God who created them,—*the God who redeemed them by the*

sacrifice of His only Son Jesus Christ, our Lord ?

Few, it is to be feared (comparatively speaking), have walked with God from their youth, and the greater number are mere *nominal* Christians ; called Christians when they really need as much conversion as Nicodemus did.

Did we bring up our children from their very infancy in the love and the fear of a Holy God, and train them for heaven, their minds would be led on and on in our Holy Faith, and soon would they live above the world, though living in it ; they would glorify the God who created them, and diffuse happiness and joy around them.

To them conversion would be unnecessary.

They would be daily growing more

like their Saviour,—that being the c  
great anxiety of their lives.

But if we are not amongst tl  
number, we must seek the Saviour  
Nicodemus sought Him, and we sh  
then as surely learn what conversion  
as Nicodemus learnt from the lips  
the living Jesus.



## XIV.

### *The Deeds of the Believer.*

JESUS says "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth *truth*, cometh to the light, that his

deeds may be manifest, that they are  
*wrought in God.*"

*Deeds wrought in God.*

These words mean something : they are the words of Jesus. Surely we should do well to examine our daily words, and deeds, that they may be daily and hourly guided by the Spirit of our God, "that they may be *made manifest that they are wrought in God.*" What high and holy teaching is here in every sentence ! They contain the whole of that "*Gospel of the kingdom*, that Jesus came teaching and preaching."

Never forget that they are the words of Jesus. Study the third chapter of St. John, and pray for your own conversion, *if that blessed change has not*

yet passed over your heart ; and now determine to give your heart to God, for Jesus Himself has said, “ *Ask and ye shall receive :* ” but if you *ask not*, the sin is on your own soul—you disobey God, and reject not man’s teaching, but the ministry of the Holy Jesus.

## XV.

### *Offences and Injuries.*

HEAR what our Saviour says about offences and injuries. He tells His disciples that "*offences must come ;*" and who has lived a few years in this world and not painfully felt the truth of this, nay even perhaps himself has been the person to give the offence. But what says Jesus ? " Woe to them by whom the offence cometh : " teaching them that " by cutting off a right hand or foot," they must put away from themselves every sin, however dear to them, though it may be as hard as parting with " a right hand or a right foot ; " lest, Jesus says, " they be cast *into everlasting fire,*" or " *hell fire,*" as *Jesus also calls it.*

How can man say there is no such thing, when the Lord of heaven and earth so often declares *there is!*

When Peter asks our Saviour how oft he is to forgive his brother who sins against him, "till seven times?" Jesus replies—"I say not unto thee till seven times, but until seventy times seven;" which forgiveness Jesus immediately illustrates by the Parable of the king taking account of his servants, and finding one who owed him money, and who implored his forgiveness, which he granted; but the same servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him money, and he cast him into prison. His lord, having been told of it, "was wrath, and delivered that servant to whom he had forgiven his debt to the tormenters, till *he should pay all that was due to him.*"

“So likewise (says Jesus) shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Then to comfort the sinner, as Jesus always does after denouncing a sin, He says—“for the Son of man is come to save that which was lost ;” illustrating this by the seeking for the lost sheep. So that *none* can despair of God’s mercy *if they will only seek it.*

If you have indulged in an unforgiving spirit, if you have even belonged to that number of whom Jesus says “Woe to them *by whom* offences come,”—yet that same Jesus is now pleading for you in heaven, and gives you His Holy Spirit to convince you of sin, and to bring you back to Him in penitence *and tears.* Resist Him not.

## XVI.

### *The Scriptures.*

OUR Blessed Lord's command respecting the Scriptures is very clear.

“*Search* the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of *Me*.

“And ye *will not* come unto *Me*, that ye might have life.

“For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed *Me*, for *he wrote of Me*; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe *My words*?” *Jesus* simply states that Moses' writings are to be believed.

*What Jesus says is enough for an*

honest inquirer. Let us then diligently *search the Scriptures*. Each day they will present some new thoughts to us, and each succeeding year we shall see things we had not seen before, and wonder we did not think of them, so often as we had read the same sentence. So true is it that that holy book never grows old, but is ever creating fresh interests, and opening out to our minds more glorious teachings. In sorrow or in joy we may equally turn to it. There is something fitted for every mind.

And if we cannot now understand many things, how comforting are these words of Jesus,—“If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.”

Lord enable me to do Thy Will more *and more*.



## XVII.

### *The Institution of the Holy Supper.*

As the hour of our Saviour's sufferings approached, His teachings became deeper and higher.

Although He had already spoken to His disciples, and showed them "how that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and Chief Priests, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," yet the disciples did not seem to comprehend it or to expect it ; for not till the Pass-over night did they believe that their Lord was to be betrayed to His enemies, and *that* by one of their own *number*.

It was as they were eating this Passover that Jesus instituted the Holy Supper, which we still commemorate. "He took *bread*, and blessed, it and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat : this is My *body*. And He took the *cup*, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is *My blood* of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

"But I say unto you, *I* will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until *that Day* when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

St. Mark relates this institution in the same words. St. Luke is nearly the same : "And Jesus said unto them, *With desire* I have desired to eat this

Passover with you before I suffer : for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

“And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves : for *I* say unto you, *I* will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took *bread*, and *brake* it, and gave unto them, saying, This is *My body* which is given for *you* : *This do in remembrance of Me*. Likewise of the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in *My blood*, which is shed for *you*.”

St. John does not give an account of the Passover ; but in the 6th chapter we find that when Jesus perceived that the multitudes followed Him to Capernaum, He says, “Verily, verily,

I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled ;” and He took this opportunity of telling the Jews that “the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth His life for the world.....*I am the Bread of Life.* He that *cometh* to Me *shall never* hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” And again Jesus says, “*I am that Bread of Life.....this is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat this Bread he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*”

*The Jews still murmur, and Jesus*

continues—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the FLESH of the Son of man, and drink His *blood*, ye have *no life* in you. Whoso *eateth My flesh*, and *drinketh My blood*, hath *eternal life*, and I will raise him up at the last Day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, *dwelleth in Me*, and *I in him*.

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he *shall live by Me*. This is that Bread which came down from heaven : *not as your fathers did eat manna* and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall *live for ever*."

This Jesus said in the Synagogue in Capernaum.

"Many of His disciples when they

heard this, said, This is a *hard* saying ; who can hear it ? ”

But Jesus said to them, “ Doth this offend you ? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before. It is the Spirit that quickeneth : the *flesh profiteth nothing*. The words that *I* speak unto you, they are *Spirit* and they are *Life*.”

In all these accounts Jesus calls the bread His Body, and the wine His Blood, in the same way that Jesus calls Himself “ the *door* of the sheepfold ; ” and in another place a Vine, when He says—“ *I am a Vine*.” And in St. John, after those mysterious words to the Jews at Capernaum, He tells His disciples that “ the words that *I* speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. What and if ye shall see the Son *of man ascend* up where He was be-

fore ? It is the *Spirit* which quickeneth : the *flesh profiteth nothing*." Plainly showing that what He said be *spiritually* understood.

The mysterious work in the soul of man is to be aided by this emblematic eating of the Bread, and drinking of the fruit of the Vine, which Jesus has commanded us to observe "in remembrance of Him."

He also clearly states, that "He will not taste the fruit of the vine, until the *kingdom of God* shall come ; until that Day when *I* shall drink it new *with you* in My Father's kingdom."

Wonderful, that even in the world to come this mysterious Holy Supper is to be continued, in joyful remembrance *of our Lord*, and *with our Lord* ; when the redeemed shall sing, "Wo-

thy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and honour, and glory, and blessing.....for Thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us to God by Thy blood*, out of every kindred and tongue and people, and hast made us unto God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.

“Blessed time, when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.”



## XVIII.

*How, and when, Jesus enforces Love  
to each other.*

AFTER that last Passover, of which Jesus had said, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," He tells His disciples that one shall betray Him. What a moment of sorrow must have burst upon them, "as they looked one on another, doubting;" and the cry rose simultaneously from their lips, "Is it I? Is it I?"—but soon Jesus relieved their minds, and showed them the traitor: and "immediately He went out, and it was night."

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Then it was, in the stillness of that midnight hour, that Jesus said to His disciples, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you.....Ye shall seek Me.....Whither I go ye cannot come.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; *as I have loved you*, that ye also love one another. *By this* shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

One would think that a command given at such a time, under such circumstances, would have bound all Christians together in all ages ; but, alas ! what do we see ?—contentions, evil passions, disputings, where all should be love ; and men cannot tell that we are the disciples, the followers of Jesus.

These things ought not to be. Let *us often think* of this night, and of

this command of Jesus—"Love one another," *as I have loved you.*

Still, in this hour of bitter suffering, when all was being rapidly accomplished that was acted in Prophecy for so many thousand years before, and Jesus was to be led out to suffer without the gates of Jerusalem, He still could think of His sorrowing disciples, and say, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you to Myself ; that where I am, ye may be also.

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." And when Thomas replies, "We know *not* whither thou goest, and *how* can we know the way?"

Jesus does not rebuke him, but says to him, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; no man cometh unto the Father but *by Me*."

Then Jesus shows them how they ought to *abide* in Him as the branches *abide* in the Vine—which He says He is ; and then He says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, that your joy might be *full*." And again Jesus says, "This is *My* commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. These things I command you, That ye love one another."

## XIX.

### *Deeper Truths.*

THERE are in our Holy Religion mysterious truths, which no human reason can fathom, and which eternity alone will reveal ; yet Jesus has spoken them, and we believe.

That union that subsist between the soul of man—the soul of the believer and his Saviour, and the union of the Father and the Son, are the deep subjects of our Saviour's discourse before His death.

Jesus had a little before said. “*I and My Father are One,*” for which the Jews had sought to stone Him ; and again Jesus had said, “*Believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him ;*” and they sought again to take Him.

Jesus says to His disciple Philip, who asked Him to show him the Father, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? *He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that *I am in the Father, and the Father in Me*? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but *the Father that dwelleth in Me*, He doeth the works. *Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me*; or else believe Me for the very work's sake.

"Yet a little while, and the world shall not see Me; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall *know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.*"

"*If a man love Me, he will keep My*

words ; and *My Father will love him,* and *we* will come unto him, and make *our abode* with him."

And in that last and beautiful prayer before the Saviour's agony in the garden, He prays for His disciples. "*I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we are.*

"Neither pray I for these alone, *but them also that shall believe on Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that*

Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which *Thou* gavest Me I have given them ; *that they may be one*, even as *we are one* : *I in them*, and *Thou in Me*, that they may be made perfect in *one* ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as *Thou hast loved Me*."

This is the deep mysterious truth that the world cannot understand, and that can only be felt by the true believer. Oh how should *this Spiritual union* keep us from sin, so "*that the world may know that God has sent Jesus*" to save His people from their sins.

St. Paul speaks of this mysterious union, or oneness, when he says "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." And again "your body is the temple of God.



“Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates.”

St. Paul calls it a mystery. “Christ in you, the hope of glory ;” and Peter calls you a “partaker of the Divine Nature.” Christian meditate on these things. *Your* body is the “temple of the Holy Ghost,—of God.”

“Jesus is in you,” you are a partaker of the Divine Nature. How can you *allow* yourself in any sin ? May it keep you and me more and more from sin, and may we often meditate on these mysterious truths.

“We indeed are *not our own*, for we are bought with a price ;” the suffering life, and the agonizing death of Jesus who laid down His life for us.

“Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

## XX.

### *The Promises of Jesus.*

As the time of His betrayal draws nigh how loving and kind are the words of Jesus to His sorrowing disciples. He is obliged to tell them that they will be hated like their Master, and that every one that persecuteth them will think that he doeth God service ; but He adds "These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended."

His promises abound as their sorrow increases, for He says "Whatsoever ye *shall ask in My name* that will I do,

that the Father may be glorified in the Son ;” and again, “If ye ask any thing in My Name, I will do it.”

“And *I* will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him : but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

“*I* will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.

“These things have I spoken to you being yet present with you ; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto *you*.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.”

Three times more Jesus promises the “Comforter.” He sees their sorrow, and says—“Ye therefore *have sorrow* : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in My Name, He will give it you . . . . Ask and ye shall receive, and your joy shall be full.

“These things have I spoken unto you, *that in Me ye might have peace*. In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer : *I have overcome the world.*”

*That in Me ye might have peace.*  
*That alone is the believer's comfort.*

Peace now, as then. “Being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“By whom we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

## XXI.

### *Temptation.*

THE Passover being ended, Jesus went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives ; but now what concentrated sorrow filled His holy heart.

The disciples followed Him.—He withdrew a little from them and prayed.

No doubt the Tempter was exerting all his power, at that moment, on the human nature of our Lord ; for what are the words He utters, as He kneels there and prays ?

“ Father, if it be *possible*, if Thou be willing,—remove this cup from Me ; *nevertheless* not My will, but Thine be

done." What extreme agony must have forced this prayer from the Saviour's lips,—agony so great that an angel came to Him from heaven strengthening Him ; but "still being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down on the ground." And this for you, and me,—and at that very moment. *The last words*, that last exhortation to the disciples, before Jesus is led to Judgment, ought to come to *us* with great solemnity.

"Enter not into temptation : " and again, " Pray, *lest* ye enter into temptation."

"He, being in agony, prayed earnestly."

Jesus, who knows the Tempter's power, exhorts you "*not to enter into temptation*, —to pray, lest ye enter into

temptation ; and in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews we have this assurance,—"He that suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted."

St. James says "a man is tempted when he is lead of his lusts, and enticed."

What those lusts, or desires, or thoughts are, differ in every one ; but you must know your own individual sins, and what you are most prone to, and the circumstances that lead to them.

Let the words of Jesus at the time of His agony, be your daily meditation before you leave the quiet of your room to enter on the business or the occupations of the day,—“Pray, *lest* ye enter into temptation.”

“Enter *not* into temptation.” Pray *earnestly* to *keep* these words of Jesus *in your mind*, that even if you are



tempted, the Spirit may *then* bring them so forcibly to your remembrance that by the Saviour's help ("He who succours them that are tempted") you may overcome, as He overcame.

"Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

## XXII.

*Words uttered during the sufferings  
at the Death of Jesus.*

WE have now noticed the last exhortation of our blessed Lord to His disciples.

He is immediately betrayed, seized, bound as a common malefactor, and led to the High Priest's house.

Peter follows Him, but cowardly denies all knowledge of Him; yet Jesus, even in that dreadful hour, "turns and looks on Peter,"—and Peter goes out *and weeps bitterly.*

Christian! Jesus cannot now turn and look on you when you sin, but does He not come to your soul, and show you often that you have sinned? And do you “weep bitterly,” that you have dishonoured your Saviour, or do you go on rejecting the inward testimony of your Lord?

The men that held Jesus, mocked and smote Him, and then led Him to Pilate; who sent Him to Herod, who only mocked Him, and sent Him back to Pilate. Three times did Pilate try to save Him, but being a weak man, yielded at last to the cry of “Crucify Him! crucify Him!”

Then was Jesus led away to be crucified, and a *great company* of people followed, and bewailed and pitied Him. Even then, Jesus turns their thoughts from His own bitter sufferings to them-

selves, when He says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children."

And what are the wonderful words He utters when nailed on the cross at Calvary ?

"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

That very prayer began to be answered the moment Jesus cried "It is finished ;" for the centurion on guard when he heard this, glorified God, and said—Truly this man was the Son of God.

We little know to whom this loving prayer of Jesus has since been fulfilled ; for there are still many heathen, and many ignorant of Christ, to whom the Gospel of the kingdom has not yet come ; but this mercy of our Saviour *must not* hinder our efforts to bring

this Gospel before them, that they also may know the love of Christ.

One other comforting word Jesus spoke while extended on that cross in inexpressible agony : “ *This day* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

And these words He addressed to a murderer, but a murderer who was *deeply penitent*. For this man’s state of mind is exactly the state of mind of every penitent that comes to Jesus and is forgiven.

Observe what he says to his scoffing companion : “ We suffer indeed *justly*” for our offences :—

So does the penitent sinner feel that he merits punishment, for God hath declared—“the soul that sinneth it shall die.” But Jesus hath taken away this curse ; and His words—“*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,*”

are our comfort in our lives, and on our death beds. "*To-day*,"—not after thousands of years, but *to-day*! straight from the bed of suffering to His Holy presence—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

## XXIII.

### *The Words of Jesus after His Resurrection.*

THERE the Saviour lay, in that cold sepulchre, with a heavy stone rolled to the entrance, and that stone made fast with a seal, while the Roman sentries paced to and fro in the darkness of that Jewish Sabbath night ; but before the morning of the first day of the week broke on the stillness of that night, an earthquake had shaken the place, and an angel had descended from heaven, and rolled back the sealed stone. The sentries shook with fear and became as dead men,—“for the Lord had risen.”

*The words of a departing friend are*

precious,—how much more so the words of a risen Saviour! The first appearance of our risen Lord was to the women at the sepulchre, and to them He addresses words of comfort, which indeed they needed, after their unutterable sorrow, and the sudden change that takes place in their hearts in hearing and seeing their risen Lord.

To them He says,—“ All hail! Be not afraid.”

He then goes into Galilee, where He appointed the eleven disciples to meet Him, and then it is that Jesus gives them their great wide-world commission, in the name of the Holy Trinity, saying, “ All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth ; go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, *and of the Son, and of the Holy*



Ghost. Teaching them to observe *all things* whatsoever I have commanded you : and Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." And in St. Mark we read that Jesus said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that *believeth*, and is *baptized*, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

"And these signs shall follow them that believe. In My Name shall they cast out devils : they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

These signs, we are taught, have ceased since that time. Perhaps the *belief* now is very inferior to what it

was then, and to what it ought to be, or some of these signs might be continued. Still they were more required at the time our Lord spoke these words, as the whole world was one mass of heathenism, and Judæa itself in the hands of idolaters.

Jesus appeared to Peter and others at the Sea of Tiberias, where He causes an unusual draught of fishes, and dines with them. After which He says to Peter, who had denied Him thrice, "Lovest Thou Me?" And this He repeats three times, so that Peter, no doubt remembering his former sin, is grieved,—but Jesus then gives him the commission : "Feed My sheep."

As two disciples (not of the eleven) were walking to Emmaus, talking together of all the things that had *happened* at Jerusalem, Jesus drew

ar, and said unto them,—“What manner of communications are these at ye have one to another, as ye ilk, and are sad?” How compassionate of our Lord! But He did not allow them to continue in that dross and bewilderment of mind. When they had related all that had happened, and the reason of their dross, Jesus replies, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And, beginning at Moses, opened to them the scriptures.”

As soon as Jesus was known to them in the breaking of bread at supper, He left them; and supper being ended, they immediately went back to Jerusalem, and found the

eleven and others gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen, and has appeared unto Simon;" and while they were yet speaking, He appeared in their midst, and says,—

"Peace be unto you."

Again He appears to them, and repeats the salutation,—

"Peace be unto you."

Perhaps to call to their remembrance the words spoken before His suffering,—"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Peace is the privilege of the believer : Jesus wishes us to have peace. Let us take the pardon and the peace *that Jesus gives*, and go on our way *rejoicing*.

## XXIV.

*The Words and Doings of our risen  
Lord continued till His Ascension.*

JESUS said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me."

What a testimony is here to the truth of the Old Testament, in the very words of our Saviour !

*Jesus again explains the Scriptures*

to them, and said, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again the third day. And that repentance and *remission of sins* should be preached in *His name* among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Forty days was Jesus in the wilderness before He began His ministry on earth ; forty days does He remain on earth in His resurrection-body before He begins in heaven His ministry of Intercession.

And what great comfort and encouragement, even at the hour of dissolution, do we get from these forty days that our risen Lord remained upon earth !

He spoke to His disciples,  
 He walked with them,  
 He eat with them ;  
*We do not here read that He drank*

with them, but when He took the last Passover with them, He said, "I shall not drink of this fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

He also stands suddenly in their midst,—the doors being shut.

And when they think they see a spirit, He saith, "A spirit hath not *flesh and bones* as ye see Me have,"—yet He was the identical Jesus that was crucified, dead, and buried: the marks on His hands and side it pleased Him to retain, for Thomas did not believe till he had seen them.

And with that body Jesus walks with them as far as the Mount of Olives, near Bethany, where "He lifted up His hands and blessed them . . . . and He was parted from them, and *ascended* into heaven."

But they sorrowed not as when He was removed by death. St. Luke tells us that they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God ; and well they might, for two angels had told them, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven shall *so come*, in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Well might they return to Jerusalem with great joy ; a new life had opened upon them. They had seen One who had passed through the horrors of death and the grave, and *that One* the first fruits of them that sleep, or the first fruits of the resurrection :

"Afterwards them that *are* Christ's."

We shall be like Him ! Yes, and know each other in our resurrection *bodies as He* knew the disciples, and



talk with each other as He talked with the disciples, and eat and drink in that heavenly kingdom after a heavenly fashion.

Oh let our hearts be filled with great joy, and let us be continually in God's Temple, praising and blessing God.

And may we walk in this world as living above it, looking for the glorious appearing of our Saviour, when sin and sorrow, temptation and weariness, shall cease for ever, and we shall be ever with the Lord.

### *A Daily Meditation.*

How can I,—“the Temple of God,”—  
—“the Temple of the Holy Ghost,”—  
“One with Christ, as He is with the  
Father,”—“in fellowship with the Fa-  
ther and the Son,”—“a partaker of  
the Divine Nature,”—be angry, be  
provoked, be ill-natured, be jealous, be  
covetous, or allow myself in any sin?  
O Lord, “Thy grace is sufficient for  
me.”

Having therefore these promises, let  
me cleanse myself from all filthiness of  
the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness  
in the fear of the Lord.

1 Cor. iii. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 19. John xvi. 11. 1 John i. 3.  
2 Peter. i. 4. 2 Cor. xii. 9. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

## A PRAYER

*In time of suffering.*

OH Lord Jesu, who didst hear the cry of Thy disciples when their ship was tossed in the tempest and winds,—Thou who didst arise and rebuke the winds and the tempest, so that there was “*a great calm*,”—now, oh Jesu, from Thy intercessory throne, arise and rebuke the agonies and suffering of pain, so that there shall be a “*great calm*.”

Also, oh Lord, arise and rebuke the unruly wills and tempers of Thy servants, as Thou didst the furies of the elements,—and let there be “*a great calm* ;” so that we may more holily and more consistently walk as Thy children, oh God, and heirs of Thy kingdom purchased for us by Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

*A Thanksgiving for Mercies received.*

OH Lord Jesu, who didst hear the cry of the ten lepers, and didst heal them all, and yet one alone returned, and with a loud voice glorified God. Thou hast heard my cry, Thou hast answered my petition, and I desire now to thank Thee for all Thy many mercies and blessings; and beseech Thee to continue Thy loving kindness to Thy child, that I may hourly look to Thee in all events of life, in sorrow, and in joy; and be Thou my Guide, till I receive the inheritance promised to all that love Thee.

“Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy *Name.*” Amen.

*Having finished the Ministry of Jesus while on earth till He was parted from His disciples and ascended into the Heavens, we will now consider the Messages of our ascended Lord to seven of the earliest Churches in Asia-Minor.*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS.

It was to St. John, the beloved disciple, —who in the hour of trial and human despondency, banished from the abodes of men to the isle of Patmos, *for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus*,—that this wonderful vision of the golden candlesticks, and One like unto the Son of man in the midst, was vouchsafed ; and the message from the Lord Jesus to the seven Churches given.

Ephesus, is the first addressed. It was a celebrated city of Ionia, in Asia-Minor. Here had been the famous temple of the heathen goddess Diana, and here had been practised the great-

est idolatries and magic ; but here St. Paul subsequently formed a numerous Christian Church.

Jesus commands St. John to write thus to the angel, or bishop, of that Church. " I know thy *works*, and thy *labours* and thy *patience*, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil. And thou has known them that say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them liars, and hast borne and hast patience, and for my namesake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

These words, addressed previously to the Church of Ephesus, may often be addressed to those that succeeded, and were written for our instruction also.

Let us then consider these words as addressed to us. And what a consolation to many a one in sorrow and *in trial*, to feel that Jesus says to him



—“I know thy works, and labour, and patience.”

Nothing is overlooked by our Lord. Not one little advance towards holiness, not one sinful gratification given up, not an evil habit or a bad companion from whom you have separated, or a little work done for Christ's sake, but is known and noticed by Jesus; and He says to you—“I know thy works, and labour, and patience.”

He says of the Church of Ephesus —“I know thou canst not bear them which are evil.”

How is it then with you? Do you love the company of the ungodly, and associate with them by choice? Do you unnecessarily place yourselves in the way of temptation?

If not, Jesus addresses the same words to you. He knows it all: He

knows all your struggles against sin, He knows all the circumstances in which you are placed, He sees all your patience with the sins of others. He sees how "thou hast borne and had patience for His namesake, and hast not fainted."

Jesus sees all this, and commends it ; yet, as a just and faithful High Priest, He tells the Church of its sins.

And does He not also tell us ? Does He not often make us to feel things sinful in which we indulge ?

He tells the Ephesians "that they have left their first love."

How is it with you ? Are you as anxious now as when you began to run the Christian race ? Do you feel as much the importance of a saved soul ? *Do you now try your utmost to lead any soul that comes in your way to*

God? Are you as earnest in prayer for yourself and others? If not, Jesus says to you—"Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place,—*except thou repent.*"

Let not this present world, with its attractions, its business, and its pleasures, quench those higher feelings implanted in you by the Spirit of your God.

After this warning to the Church at Ephesus and to you, Jesus concludes with this encouraging promise,—“To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

To obtain these promises, repent. Seek again the pardoning blood of your Saviour. Do your first works. Acknow-

ledge your omission of duty, neglect of prayer, forgetfulness of God. Search out every sin, and bring it all to Him ; who will willingly take the burden on Himself, and say unto thee—"Thy sins be forgiven thee : go and sin no more."

THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
CHURCH OF SMYRNA.

THE message of our Lord to the Church of Smyrna contains not one word of reproof. Jesus addresses them as a suffering Church, and as such He leads them to look to their risen Lord and Saviour.

“These things saith the First and the Last, *which was dead and is alive* ;

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty.”

What a source of comfort to His Church in all ages, that Jesus knows our works, sees, and sympathises with *all our sorrows and tribulations.* We

cannot be afflicted but He is afflicted. He says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

He exhorts that Church, as He exhorts us—"to be faithful unto death, and He will give us a crown of life:"—"He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the *second* death."

The *first* death we all know, but that second death is to be revealed to those who obey not His Gospel.

Jesus tells this Church, "that though they are poor they are rich," because their faith and love were strong; so let ours be, in whatever situation we may be placed.

THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
CHURCH OF PERGAMOS.

JESUS writes in a very different way to the Church of Pergamos. He reveals Himself as He that hath "the sharp sword with two edges;" and yet He commends them for "holding fast His Name, even where Satan's seat is."

He had a few things against this Church: some of them "held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel."

And have not corruptions crept into our Churches? How many a member

casts a stumbling-block in a brother's way ?

How careful should we be of every little thing which may prevent the growth of religion in a brother's heart, how watchful over our words and actions, fully awake to every wrong impression we may thoughtlessly give, and try to avoid it for the future.

This Church of Pergamos was evidently a careless Church ; and so, in our Church do we not find many careless ? We have many outward professors, like the Nicolaitans, and yet living in outrageous sins. And what Jesus says to that Church, He says to us,—“ Repent ; or else I will come quickly and fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.”

*Then, as Jesus always does, He pronounces a blessing to those who*



overcome and do as He commands them.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
CHURCH OF THYATIRA.

ST. JOHN is commanded to write to this Church in these words :—

“These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass.”

This communication of Himself is different from what Jesus made to the former Churches.

There is evidently much to blame in this Church, and Jesus writes as seeing it with displeasure, and with intention to punish it; yet as in the other *Churches* there are always some faithful members, so there are in this,—and

Jesus addresses them, when He says, "I know thy works, thy charity, thy service, and faith and patience, and thy works, and the *last* to be more than the first."

Let us then inquire if we merit such a commendation ; without which Jesus cannot be pleased with us.

As to our charity.—Have we that love to others, that forbearance to others, that thoughtfulness for others, that is signified by charity ?

As to our service.—What do we render to our God ? Do we worship Him as He tells us to worship Him, "in Spirit and in truth" ?

Do we *worship* in His holy House ? Do we thus worship Him in our private devotions ? Do we serve Him in our lives and conduct ?

It is not their Christian experience

in spiritual knowledge that Jesus commends in this Church.

It is the practical holiness that flows from their faith: for the faith that brings forth the fruit of holiness, patience, love, and *progressive* sanctification, *dead* faith.

Jesus says of the works of the Church, "that He knows their works the last to be more than the first."

Are you thus progressing? You may obtain correct notions in religion but do you stop there? They will not save you.—Real faith in a Saviour is a faith that works, subduing gradually all the corruptions of our nature, giving up sin by sin as they are brought to the mind's eye by the Spirit of God. And this should be the duty of *prayer* of a true believer,—*Convict me of sin, show me my sins, the*

Thee I may subdue them and live to Thy glory.

Examine your own heart, and see if you are one of this little flock, that Jesus commends.

Is Christianity a *growing* life? are you less selfish, less self-willed, more patient with the faults of others: are you bearing and forbearing? In short, are your *last* works more than your first?

If so, then there is evidence that your Christianity is a reality; and while Jesus is condemning those members of the Church that are given up to all manner of wickedness, He will say to you,—“Hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the

vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father : and I will give him the Morning Star."

This certainly alludes to that passage where it says "Jesus shall come with ten thousand of His saints taking vengeance on the ungodly."

And then, in giving them the Morning Star it means Himself: He is the Morning Star, and will ever lead them. He will shine through all the darkness and the gloom that may beset their earthly path ; and as the rainbow in the storm cheers the eye of the weary traveller, so will He ever cheer the hearts of His children, until He presents them faultless before the throne of His Father.

**THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
CHURCH OF SARDIS.**

**THE** words addressed to the Church of Sardis differ again from those to the foregoing Churches :—

“These things saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God and the Seven Stars.”

Jesus here reminds this Church that He is the disposer of the Holy Spirit in all His fulness, and that the overseers of the Churches, the angels or bishops, are His workmen. He begins with encouragement, before He censures them ; and then He adds, “ I know thy

works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

There is no great outbreak of sin mentioned, as in the words addressed to the last Church, and there is no general commendation. The sin appears to be that of hypocrisy.

Now let us turn to our own times and to our own hearts, and consider these words of Jesus,—“a name to live, and art dead.”

You attend the services of the Church, perhaps you are even a communicant, but what is your daily life?

What engrosses your time, your thoughts, and your affections?

Do you spend your days in idleness and unprofitableness?

Do you indulge in sinful practices, *which at times your own heart condemns?* Are there as many outbreaks



of evil and unkind tempers,—selfish, irritable, or sullen tempers,—angry and hard speeches to those around you ;—jealousies among yourselves,—a want of love and forbearance and patience in your families,—a neglect of prayer, or perhaps the words of prayer pronounced while in the heart lurks some spiritual pride, some unholy temper, still retained ? Oh remember Jesus says, “I know thy works.” He sees all, and to you He says—“remember how thou hast received, hold fast, and repent.” It is because you have neglected to hold fast, that all the good impressions you may have received, and all the good resolutions you may have formed, so quickly passed away.

Be earnest and faithful in prayer.—Make the realities of Scripture your own.—“Be watchful and strengthen

the things that remain and are ready to die."

What a gracious warning to a soul sorrowing over its short comings and its departures from God : it is ready to die, but Jesus says to it, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that *remain*."

Thou art still a child of God, yet "ready to die,"—so far have you fallen, so little spiritual life have you : but attend to your Saviour's words, and arise from your lethargy, and be of good cheer ; repent, and turn again to Him *to-day*, else "Jesus may come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour He will come upon thee."

Even in the hypocritical state of this Church Jesus acknowledges those "few that have not defiled their garments : they shall walk with Me in *white*, for they are worthy."

And then comes this gracious promise :—

“ He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His angels.”

· May every reader of these words be a partaker of these promises.

THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA.

THE address to this Church is such as to give them great confidence, and to encourage them to persevere.

“These things saith He that is Holy, He that is true, He that hath the keys of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.” Then follow words of commendation, though they have but “little strength.”

“I know thy works. Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast little *strength*, and hast kept My word, and *hast not denied My Name.*”

To this Church there are no words of reprobation, of threatening, nor of calling to repentance.

"Thou hast little strength." Humble as to thy progress in holy things, little strength in thyself; but thou hast sought that strength which has enabled thee to "keep My Word and not to deny My Name."

May this lead us to feel our own utter insufficiency to do any good thing of ourselves; but by God's holy Spirit, given to all who ask for it, let us "keep His word," and "not deny His Name" in word, or action.

That Church is encouraged "to hold fast," but no threat follows, as we find with the other Churches. Commendation only, and the most blessed promises.

*"Because thou hast kept the word*

of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, and try them that dwell upon the earth.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, which is New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from My God. I will write upon him My new name.”

Let us then imitate this Church, and inherit these blessed promises.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE  
CHURCH OF LAODICEA.

WE have now come to our Lord's message to the Church of Laodicea; and here He calls Himself "the Amen, —the faithful and true Witness,—the Beginning of the Creation of God."

The state of this Church differs from that of all the former Churches. No commendations are given, no condemnations; they are neither good nor vile, but *lukewarm*. Jesus says—"I know thy work, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot."

This is just as if there were more likelihood of their amendment had they been open sinners : they seem to be self-satisfied. This is another class, and one frequently to be found in our days, where there is much church-going and rather a slur is cast upon those who do not frequent some place of worship.

But with the millions that go to church, the wandering eye, the listless attitude, the vacant face, sometimes the small whisperings about worldly things, bespeak many a lukewarm member. Some perhaps may be attentive listeners, who are made to feel the realities of a world to come, and that they are unfit to enter it in their present state ; they leave the church, *and with it*, all these passing feelings, *which they* have not allowed to take



root. The morrow finds them immersed in pleasure or in business, and few, if any thoughts on God ; their favourite sins, checked perhaps for a time, break out with double violence.

Yet every Sabbath finds them in the House of God. They have the commendation of the world, and that suffices ; and they go on and on, anxious on all other subjects, but *lukewarm* as to the things of eternity. Some may even say, like the Laodiceans, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing ;" thus satisfying themselves with being as good as others, perhaps better. They do what they think their duty, and injure no one, and there they rest complacently.

You have seen God's threatenings to impenitent sinners and His exhortations to repent, but to these *lukewarm*

members His message is—"So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth." What words can convey more absolute loathing and disgust than these? and yet Jesus gives *them* counsel!

Consider well if you are at all like this Church; and if so, listen to the counsel of Jesus, while there is time. "I counsel thee to buy of Me, gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." Jesus offers you, even if you are lukewarm, to come to Him again. He tells you, figuratively, to get what you have not, to give up self, and seek His pardon and His righteousness.

*To you, the lukewarm, is it that Jesus says, "As many as I love I rebuke*

and chasten ; be *zealous* therefore and repent."

Jesus loves you yet, and bids you repent in most affectionate words. He is ever waiting for you. "Behold I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Jesus then is knocking at the door of your heart, refuse Him no longer, though you may at this moment be only a *lukewarm professor* ; and let Him say to you, as He did to that Church, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne." Seek then that pardon which He so freely offers. Lay your sins, your shortcomings, your backslidings on Him, and pleading His merits, and

not your own ; begin a new life, endeavouring by the Holy Spirit, to please and glorify Him more and more, till your change shall come, and you shall ever be with the Lord.

## HYMN.

Oft in danger, oft in woe,  
Onward, Christians, onward go ;  
Fight the fight, maintain the strife,  
Strengthen'd with the bread of life.

Let not sorrow dim your eye,  
Soon shall every tear be dry ;  
Let not fears your course impede,  
Great your strength, if great your need.

Onward, Christians, onward go,  
Join the war, and face the foe ;  
Fight, nor think the battle long,  
Soon shall victory wake your song.

Onward then to glory move,  
More than conquerors you shall prove :  
Still through danger, toil, and woe,  
Christian soldiers, onward go.

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